

Arlington Redevelopment Board
May 2, 2016 Minutes
Town Hall Annex, Second Floor Conference Room, Town Hall – 7:00pm

This meeting was recorded by ACMi.

PRESENT: Andrew Bunnell (Chair), Kin Lau, Andy West

ABSENT: Mike Cayer

STAFF: Jennifer Raitt, Laura Wiener

Documents Used:

Application to reopen special permit docket #3476, 248 Massachusetts Avenue

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7:00 pm and stated that the meeting was being recorded by ACMi. The Chairman turned to the first agenda item, to open the public hearing to reopen special permit docket 3476 for 248 Massachusetts Avenue.

Mark Noonan and Joseph Artley introduced themselves to the Board. Mr. Noonan stated they are requesting to modify the special permit for 248 Mass. Ave. in order to make changes to the exterior of the building, and add a roof deck to their original plans. Mr. Noonan gave a brief summary of the project for the Board, and explained that the quotes he received for the original plans came in over budget. The proposed changes are a result of the exterior of the building having a different appearance because of the change in materials. He added that the Building Inspector has no objections to these proposed changes, and the abutters have been receptive to the proposed changes as well.

Mr. Bunnell said the Board has concerns over the difference between what was originally proposed and the new plans, particularly the roof deck. Mr. Bunnell asked what the purpose of the roof deck would be, and who would have access to it. Mr. Noonan said they think it will be exclusively for the third floor unit.

Mr. Bunnell asked about the addition of utility compressors outside the building. Mr. Noonan said the condensers will be on the roof. Mr. Bunnell asked for information on where they would be placed and how they would be shielded. Mr. Noonan said they will be adjacent to the staircase on the original plan.

Mr. Lau said the building still looks like a hybrid between a modern and traditional building. Mr. Lau made suggestions to adjust the banding and the window placement on the exterior of the building. Mr. Artley explained the rationale behind some of the exterior changes presented in the newest version of the plans. Mr. Lau made suggestions to add visual interest to the front of the building. Mr. West suggested an artificial, natural wood look for some of the exterior. Mr. Noonan said he would look into this as an option, but he said he was not sure this would save any money for them which was the intention of changing some of these materials.

The Chairman asked if there were any public comments. Donald Garrity said he is not an Arlington resident, but he supports this project wholeheartedly.

Mr. Bunnell said he wanted to talk about the tree and the landscaping at the front of the property. Mr. Noonan explained the revised landscaping plans to the Board, specifically the trees. Mr. Raitt pointed out that on the revised plans there is a 2" caliber tree shown, and the special permit requires a 3" caliber tree. Mr. Noonan said they are working with their arborist to resolve the tree plans and explained some of the options they have been looking at for the property, including landscaping the front yard of the property and planting cherry trees and a pin oak.

Mr. West moved to modify the special permit granted February 23, 2015 for docket #3476 for 248 Mass Ave. as amended per plans dated April 4, 2016, with the conditions as stated in the original special permit, and to add the following condition: "Applicant shall consider using a wood-like material and modifying the stairwell windows to be in line with the unit windows."

to review artificial, natural looking wood as a material to potentially be used upon review by the Director of Planning and Community Development. Mr. Lau seconded. All voted in favor.

Mr. Bunnell turned to the next agenda item of reviewing Warrant Article 22 with the Tree Committee. Susan Stamps, a member of the Tree Committee, introduced herself to the Board. The Tree Committee is looking for the Board's vote of support for Article 22. The Selectmen unanimously approved it, as well as the Conservation Commission and the Open Space Committee. Ms. Stamps reviewed the current bylaw regarding mature tree removal during major development in Arlington.

Mr. Lau asked if this only pertained to residential areas. Ms. Stamps said it applies to both residential and commercial areas.

Mr. Bunnell said that as far as residential development, this proposal is excellent. This keeps the streets looking like the kind of neighborhoods people are used to. It also helps to offset the size of some of the developments that may be produced throughout the town. Ms. Stamps clarified what the Bylaw can and cannot do to prevent tree removal on properties. Arlington cannot prevent the clear cutting, but they can encourage the replacement of a lot of trees that are removed. Ms. Stamps said the most important part of this bylaw would be bringing the preservation of trees on private property in to the discussion with developers.

Mr. Bunnell asked what the enforcement process would be. Ms. Stamps explained the process which would include the Tree Warden.

Mr. Lau mentioned that most proponents do not submit a landscaping plan when applying for a permit. Ms. Stamps said that would be a requirement with this bylaw that would work alongside the building permit process. Mr. West moved to support Article 22. Mr. Lau seconded. All voted in favor.

Mr. Bunnell turned to the agenda item of Other Business and stated that Elizabeth Pyle would like to speak with the Board about her proposed substitute motion of Warrant Article 10. Ms. Pyle, 66 Gloucester Street, introduced herself to the Board. Ms. Pyle said she had been working on some of the residential zoning changes, and is concerned with the Board's 'no action' recommendation on Article 10 because of the public safety issues related to the article. Ms. Pyle is hoping that the Board would not speak against it, since it was their article initially and it seems separate from the other zoning warrant articles. The Board agreed they would feel comfortable with the proposed substitute motion being presented and not speaking against it at Town Meeting.

Mr. Bunnell said the Board received a letter from Springboard Schools who is interested in developing a property at 93 Broadway. Ms. Raitt said she met with members from Springboard Schools, who currently are tenants at Gibbs School under the name Learn to Grow. Learn to Grow needs to find a new space for their facility in East Arlington as of next July 2017, due to the likely return of Gibbs to a public school use. Ms. Raitt said she walked them through the process and suggested that they write the Board a letter of intent for the property to introduce their concept.

Mr. Bunnell thanked the Board, the Master Plan Implementation Committee, and the Planning Department staff for their work on the mixed-use warrant articles which were passed recently at Town Meeting.

The Board decided they would approve the minutes from April 25, 2016 at the next meeting. Mr. Bunnell said he would entertain a motion to adjourn and reconvene at Town Meeting. Mr. Lau made a motion to adjourn. Mr. West seconded. All voted in favor.